

HLPF Wednesday 17 July 2019

9:00 am - 2:00 pm. Conference Room 4 Voluntary National Reviews

Panel-style presentation

Central African Republic, Eswatini

Central African – video in French

Kingdom of Eswatini: delegation of chief economist and ambassador to the UN; someone from the NGO sector and ladies doing things; Population of 1 million; Decline from 63% in 2010 to 58.9% in poverty; Challenge of high level of youth unemployment. We are mainstreaming SDGs into our National Plan and recently launched Strategic Road Map 2018-2023. Economic, social and environmental aspects have been fully integrated into every aspect of government and multistakeholders. A steering committee provides intersectoral leadership needed for cross sectional relationships. We adhere to leaving no one behind principle. We are addressing by 1) social protection – grants for orphans, vulnerable children and for the elderly and have drafted a national disability plan. 2) Regional Development Fund for reaching rural communities and have the Youth Enterprise Fund for microfinancing – 67,000 micro SMEs; 3) social sector/financing – health and education are given funds to ensure quality of life for people. Maternal mortality rates and under 5 mortality rates has declined; HIV/AIDs has shown achievement; 83% in treatment of ordinary TB; 90% coverage of eradicating malaria. King established a fund of chapter to end malaria. NCDs fell by 27% in 2018. Literacy is 95.3% for women and 91.8% for men. 22% of children have access to early childhood care. Align with principles and commitments with Paris Agreement and developed national climate change policy and strategy in 2016. Developed resilience strategy and disaster risk reduction plan of action 2017-2021 in line with Sendai. Biosphere reserve is listed in UNESCO. Key concepts of climate change awareness is integrated into curriculum including in our main university. We remain one of the most peaceful in the world. 2015 Constitution was adopted including participatory democracy. Protective laws and polices to deal with violence and abuse. Just passed Sexual Offenses and Domestic Violence Act of 2018. Partnerships: ODA rose by 30% in grants contributing to 1.3% in GDP. Witness 2.4% decline in non grant revenue. We are part of the UNDP Labs. Key challenges: low middle income country impedes access to development finance. Call for a policy review of this classification. Slow economic growth insufficient to spur investments in key social sectors and infrastructure. Data management – capacity is needed to generate and apply quality disaggregated data. Key partnerships need to be made with private sector. Need investments in ICTs. Quoted from the king HMK Mswati III.

Interactive dialogue: 2 minutes per intervention

India: He has read the reports which have insights and are mostly encouraging to developing countries. Asked Minister of Economic Planning and Development of eSwatini: going forward how do you see priorities in your roadmap and how will think current financing will met?

Ghana: Asked eSwatini: clear that Kingdom of eSwatini is implementing SDGs with full government commitment. Asked about the extent to which civil society is participating in monitoring as they are involved in the work that is going on.

Timor Leste: What can regional and international partners do to help the CAR

Workers and Trade Unions: CAR is very poor country. Progress has been made in some of the SDGs. Civil society needs to be brought on board eg for SDG 3 and asked if the government would be interested to have a collaborative group; will you access data from trade unions. eSwatini: must focus more on high quality teaching and allocating more resources (domestic) for education. Asked both countries how can you have disaggregated data?

Central African Republic response:

1. Support we require is to ensure that peace agreement is respected by all relevant parties therefore upholding security and can help most vulnerable living in areas where there are armed forces. Seek peer learning with similar situations.
2. Inclusivity in follow up mechanism – created in a participatory way but the government is fully open to include those who wish to be involved.
3. Data issue – we are emerging from long crisis. Latest census is 2003. If other partners wish to provide data, need to validate it.
- 4.

UN resident coordinator in eSwatini: limited support for UN programmes. Agrees that middle income has sort of become a curse.

eSwatini: Minister of Planning and Development: We work with UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, FAO and are grateful to assistance from the UN.

1. We do engage civil society and are developing a template to involve ministers' involvement more.
2. Priorities – inclusive and sustainable growth based on the private sector; aiming for sound micro economic management
3. Putting top priority that productivity will increase post 18 years old.
4. Need disaggregated data; some progress since 2017 census.

Minister of Planning, Iraq: This is our first VNR. Showed short video. First city is of Ur. 7,000 years ago was first agriculture. Used astronomy; built hanging gardens; mathematics, wheel, pottery, etc and have liberated their lands from terrorism. We did not lag behind global implementation of SDGs. National Vision 2030. 2015 began preparing for implementing sustainable development along two tracks: liberation and development. 2018-2022 first National Plan included ministries, CSOs and the

private sector. Task forces were established: eliminating poverty; green economy; group of cities and settlements and group of human development and for population development. 2017 forged partnerships with World Bank, UNDP, ESQUA, civil society organizations. 2018 reached aligned of SDGs applied at the national level. Localization of SDGs was achieved focusing on not leaving anyone behind – children, refugees, those with special needs, displaced persons. We are pleased to present our first VNR. Challenges continue in all spheres but we are armed with will and resolve. 71% in alignment of SDGs even one province with challenges. We want diverse society, good governance, sustainable development. Percentage of coverage of primary healthcare is now 63%. Primary education reached 94% in 2018 with gender gap being dealt with. Mentioned great seaport. Methodologies adopted is important. War created a massive humanitarian and economic crisis – 6 million were displaced many who have now returned to their homes. Took important to integrate persons with disabilities and issued a number of legislation eg Establishment of Agency for People with Special Needs and Disabilities particularly integrating to education. Reduction in % of poverty with programmes at improving living conditions. We have a long way to adapt SDGs and improve planning modes and mobilize resources and collection of data to prepare sectoral reports and establish strong diverse partnerships among stakeholders.

Mohammed: report fails to talk about challenges and resources by the state in support of local governments in the field of addressing the problem of human displacement. Challenges: corruption, confessional strife, rural urban migration, archeological treasures were not mentioned. But report of human rights report of Iraq speaks of corruption. VNR did not indicate a national plan to fight corruption and begin legislative and judicial reform. Do you have such a plan and when would it be put forward?

Iraq response:

1. Targets that effect sustainable development – It is SDG 16 tied to good governance and fighting corruption and aiming for peace and justice; SDG 9 – relates to developing infrastructure and get rid of accessive dependence on oil.
2. Challenges: political instability; economic crises; always threat of return to violence; regional potential conflict in the Gulf and the potential impact on oil income
3. Corruption – established a Council to fight corruption and holding all those to task

Saint Lucia This is our first VNR as a small island developing state facing many challenges with a narrow resource base and limited institutional capacity. Government made the decision to report to the HLPF this year. We utilized the VNR process to assess our progress, identify specific projects and to accelerate national momentum and steps to reinforce our public institutions and to mobilize necessary financial resources to facilitate development. National development approach is people-centered of leaving no one behind. 9 goals in our report were selected via national stakeholder consultations and represent those under review at this year's HLPF as well as those that have been incorporated into our national medium-term development and with priority goals from civil society. It will guide implementation in healthcare, education, citizen security, agriculture, infrastructure and tourism. It incorporates appropriate SDGs. Will establish a framework for monitoring and review of SDGs and a coordinating mechanism which was endorsed in early 2017 – SDG cabinet subcommittee

of ministers and a SDG national coordinating committee to guide implementation and monitoring of SDGs. Mandated to convene every quarter. Comprised of representatives from private sector, youth, academia, NGOs and faith based and community based organizations, women's groups and persons with disabilities. It has built partnerships with relevant stakeholders. They have presented the government with their prioritized list of SDGs related to their goals and mandates. Civil society has launched a coalition of SDGs to support national development processes. Showed video on how to deal with the issue of hunger from civil society with UNDP support. May 2019 rapid integrated assessment was done by UN Development system. Our office of audit also conducted a performance audit of readiness to implement SDGs. May 2019 launched the mainstreaming acceleration and policy support. Government is committed to dealing with multidimensional aspects of poverty (including living in environmental hazzardess areas). 2014 first national social protection. Core of our medium term strategy is committed to leaving no one behind. Challenges: lack of reliable statistical data necessary to report on selected indicators. Have identified a need for an integrated database system. We need a mechanism on which 3 SDG pillars data are collected within an integrated framework of evidence-based planning and governance. Funding shortfall due to inadequate resource mobilization as a small island state. We have international funders. We are classified as a middle income country which does not permit us to be eligible for grants and concessional loans. We are resilient.

Progress we have made via a video:

Training of teachers

Climate action plan – by 2025 want to achieve 25% renewable energy; education about climate change; working on health, transport and education.

Partners: private sector, civil society, academia

Questions:

Antigua and Barbuda: What about collaboration in the region such as OECS and CARICOM?

Trinidad and Tobago: Offered her congratulations to St. Lucia. We will offer our VNR for HLPF 2020. We completed our maps in 2017 and recognizes valuable of UNDP maps. Faces resource mobilization is shared in many small island countries. Curious to know...mike cut off.

Estonia: report speaks to close cooperation of civil society and private sector. How do maintain this relationship which is a great example of partnerships from which we could learn.

Norway: congratulated the establishment of a national coordination mechanism; inclusion of multi-stakeholders including women and persons with disabilities. How will you reduce to risk measures?

Barbados: What currency was \$3.40 per daily amount that many live on? Answer: \$1.50 US money.

Women's Major Group: some involvement but full involvement of community based ones needs to be more included and listed those who must be included. National Coordination strategy lacks holistic approach. Need a coordinated approach that takes into account risks. There are steps but they are sporadic, limited in scope. How can we engage youth?

St Lucia responses:

A strategy is to make more effective of CARICOM and Eastern Caribbean States which can be useful to deal with lack of economies of scale projects that donors look for. UNDP mapping helped to highlight need to leverage synergies. UNDP is useful as a legitimate convener. Her ministry they are aware of her mantra of engage, engage, consult, consult to get more participation which is which we emphasize multistakeholder inclusion. If I missed them, review participant list, I see buy in from all sectors of society.

I had to leave at 11:00 am

“Building Inclusive Voluntary National Reviews: Promoting civil society participation on the SDGs”
held at the Ford Foundation

Welcome: Policy and Advocacy Strategist UN Foundation, Ayson Neel. Aneel@unfoundation.org

Core objective is to have transparent VNR; supported with UN on the VNR Labs; cities working together to encourage them to do VNRs for cities. Eager to hear our thoughts. This year feels different with many newer voices are at the HLPF - partly due to SDGs under review. VNRs feel different - one member state said that expectations have ratcheted up.

We have read 15 VNRs with another 15-20 by next week and what we are seeing:

1. More are reporting on synergies and interlinkages but have not addressed tradeoffs - exception was Algeria.
2. Many included gender analysis. Sierra Leone has a gender person in its statistical office. Most did not include on LGBTQ.
3. Leave no one behind was mentioned by most. Listed vulnerable groups. Indigenous, rural communities, religious minorities (no mention), etc received less attention.
4. Many more are talking about challenges which is refreshing. Heard from member states that it is difficult in HLPF in this format to feel comfortable here to discuss this compared to regional level. Mongolia focused on challenges.
5. Multistakeholder involvement remains a challenge. Israel has included stakeholders in an annex.

Introduction by Moderator: Hannie Meesters, UNDP in Asia Pacific

Honeymoon is over; Sees more engagement;

Take into account:

1. VNRs don't take place in a vacuum; eg SDG 16 when there is shrinking of civil society space. How can we further use the Agenda 2030 to further civic space
2. Localization - push to subnational and local level - new frontier for civil society given limited resources
3. Increasing attention that business and private sector is getting which is shifting from civil society. How do we change that and deal with it?

Panel 1: Civil Society engagement in the VNR process

Oli Henman, Action for Sustainable Development VNR tool kits

Work we have been doing in past few years:

1. Acting with existing national coalitions of civil society - rewarding to see number of new participants to this year's HLPF reflecting frustrations with what has actually changed
2. Tool kit sets out ways to approach government; analyze and score progress on key areas eg multistakeholder dialogue; with a survey in this third and fourth learning

Survey is on the way with over 80 countries responding with over 500 civil society partners

1. Lack of real action on leaving no one behind - is referred to but is there actual action
2. How to connect with different agendas eg link social, economic and environmental aspects bring civil society partners together
3. Localization - not can be resolved at the capital level; within towns and cities is where change is needed
4. Public awareness is greater with localization. We had a workshop to see how to drive the Agenda 2030 forward in implementation for community organizations not business.
5. Aim to do is to continue to build momentum - eg during September Summit for a Week of Action linking climate, inequalities and civic space.

Deirdre de Burca, FORUS: Advocacy Coordinator, made up of 69 National and 7 regional coalitions to help them engage with VNRs. Asia Development Alliance is one of our members.

Key issues:

1. Difficulties in identifying entry points into VNR process
2. How to go beyond superficial consultations - one offs; lack of multistakeholder mechanisms for meaningful ongoing ones
3. Contributing to shadow reports - need help on how to do one and need to coalition build; what are best practices.

How we help:

1. Produced tool kits - 2018 three: VNRs briefing book; check list - how ready are you to be engaged; guidelines for CSOs on how to produce shadow resources - all available on website
2. Agenda 2030 Working Group meets every 8 weeks - helps to learn from each other online
3. Have an email bulletin every 8 weeks with info from around the world
4. Capacity development webinars eg with Action for Sustainable Development; TAP Network and Together 2030
5. Directly fund members eg Gala Training via Asia Development Alliance - provided excellent training; regional approach is a useful one. We sub-grant European funding up to 20,000 euros - proposals something to do with VNRs. We have peer scrutiny committee made up of members who decides who receives funding.
6. Do research, policy development and advocacy; eg with A4SD reviewed VNRs via an external civil society consultant and we shape the questions. Reports highlight good practices and gaps. Progressing SDG Implementation at National Level is the name of the reports

7. Doing HLPF reform review work - during September Summit. We have developed proposals to help with how to review. It must be at multiple levels eg national, regional, international. We have a paper on it. Circulate it in your own country.

John Romano, TAP:

Joyotsna Mohan Singh, ADA:

Panel 2: Moderated discussion and Q & A with key country perspectives

Country Case 1: Fidelis Magalhaes, Minister of State, Timor Leste He will not read his speech in this more informal environment. Timor Leste grew out of conflict. One of the biggest challenge is to handle sense of entitlements due once you become independent when state has limited resources. Government can fall back to operating like the prior governments. He is a politician who claim that we are also victims of the authoritarian past. We don't agree with this approach. You may censor urging citizen constraint due to limited resources. We had a different approach - to allow citizens to make comments, to voice their concerns. Government must explain if we cannot respond to those demands. Government has little experience in governing. Political space was created. Government had to present in nearly every event to listen. We have a very organized civil society and are active and have moral authority from their past actions. We encourage their participation via mechanisms to provide input. Example: The Social Audit Mechanisms - civil society collect voices and their concerns to the government.

Practical engagement with civil society:

1. Appropriation of data - and use of it. His hope that those voices are solid and unbendable. We have finite resources in our petroleum fund. Evidence is needed to back up demands.
2. Need well informed, well trained civil society. We disagree at times but civil society has a fundamental role to play to ensure solid and inclusive sustainable development.

We have never done it alone. We have conversations with national partners; sometimes we disagree over balance for gaining trust of citizens and constructive skepticism of citizens which is fundamental. Sometimes international partners can lean heavily on criticism not on building trust resulting in disagreement. Government has to be brave enough to disagree. Government needs some financial wiggle room which allows us to disagree which is the source of engagement eg with G7+. No country cannot develop without international support.

2012 when we were transitioning, we made it known to the UN that we wanted to be the captain of our boat.

VNR process is not one on its own for the report but is a reflection of our society. We didn't do it as an exercise - voices are part of daily life. We have a civil society advisory group and consult Parliamentarians. We consult with opposition leaders; He led/coordinated the process.

We have the national statistics plan. SDGS and statistics plan are married. Hope to have bi-annual VNR presentations.

Country Case 2: Representative of South Africa Risenga Maluleke, Statistician- General

We emerged in 1994 as a country. Now have 50% of women were appointed ministers appointed recently following May elections. They are in key positions: infrastructure, defense, security. In 2012 adopted National Developmental Plan as a basis for tracking of our development goals. Driven by collaboration - we have chapter 9 human rights, financial and trade unions and academia. Civil society has special space based on cabinet decision to involve them coming out of the MDGs. Statistics South Africa is independent. Government makes aspirational decisions. Our job is to have objective measurements. When we meet with civil society, we look at officially published statistics; we need to deal with quality checks on non official statistics (meta data or go through a cohort of evaluation). We engage with civil society and go out to the provinces and meet with them. They are the eyes and ears of everyone beyond what Government can do.

Driven by integrated nature of goals. Post 2015 has raised issues. Principle of funding gets streamlined within our ministries. Approved national coordination mechanism with different stages where SDGs is looked at (civil society is represented). Monitoring and evaluation department sitting in government. Better way comes through engagement with civil society.

Today's first VNR for South Africa was based on 2017 report and in September we will make available our first report and we will not benefit without civil society.

Government leaders go out of their offices to meet with the public to listen to them first hand on their issues.

South African woman: Had sector working committees reviewing SDGs by civil society. VNR process political, statistical (actually facilitating engagement and to what extent is civil society involved) and transformative (we want dialogue about what is working and what is not to fix what is not) arm. Transformative arm is missing from many VNRs. Are they leading us to change lives? We must have a conversation that VNRs are not just process related but action oriented.

Statistics rep: exclusive approach within the state. Organized labor engages with politicians within labor regulations and laws which doesn't necessarily sustain with civil society which should hold democratic institutions to account (everywhere). Use of statistics - not doing a great job in the social element - we are not empowering civil society. We should be able engage civil society so that you see results. Government of South tracks unemployment, inequality, poverty and have seen higher numbers for black South Africans. Progress where government is involved. We should share our statistics with civil society.

Indian man: When the issue is inequality there is tension between CSO and government in the reports. What are critical issues - eg development but inequality? We have not taken on the human rights framework. Inequality is due to lack of access but how do we deal with this?

Guatemalan businessman: appreciates this issue. Inequalities is one of our main themes. It is a multi-dimension poverty challenge: access for jobs, education, health, etc. We are more interested in working together. Business wants the impact and needs to work with civil society to get common goals.

Minister: we have conversations with those fighting for human rights and search for common points. We have 10 priorities which cannot wait for the people. Most important, we began dialogue and the road to sustainable development.

Country Case 3: Tur-Od Lkhagvajav, Mongolia

VNR process, two strands: we focused on challenge of air pollution; corruption is a development problem and 2) capacity development. Its VNR process is being used for capacity development not just for government. 3) government is trying to include civil society. Drafting report included 2 strong female Mongolian civilians.

Challenges:

1. Showed spotlight vs government VNR reports - almost the same length but civil society report is just an executive summary so it is much longer as a report. Government focuses more on process/implementation vs whole of society approach by civil society. SDG 16 - we are finalizing the report to submit in September which will be 50-60 pages. Government is not capturing enough of practice experience and knowledge that exists in civil society on SDGs.
2. Gaps in involvement of civil society esp geo political implications. Eg civil society who are more government ones.
3. How do we move forward? Our minister of Finance met us yesterday after the VNR report, he acknowledged where he recognized strength of civil society. VNR should be a partnership involving Parliamentarians, civil society, government. Parliamentarians met on SDGs recently. They could help monitor implementation of SDGs at the national level.

Legislative Act February 2016 adopted SDGs in Parliament.

Country Case 4: Miguel Angel Moir, Director of SEGEPLAN, Guatemala

Minister: Juan Pablo who is part of civil society in Guatemala in the business sector. Wants to showcase efforts that the government is doing in implementation of the SDGs which is the responsibility of the whole country with everyone with their own responsibility. We have a participation mechanism for involvement for rural and urban development. It has different levels from national, regional, municipalities. National level - principle commitment is the president; mayors in the municipality level is in the council and representatives of 18 civil society (farmers, women, cooperatives; adolescents). Also same representations at the municipal levels.

Juan Pablo: nice to hear experiences of other countries. We are working together. He is part of an NGO made up of businesses promoting sustainability working with Ministry of Planning. In 2016 began planning process: broadcasting, prioritization of SDGs eg malnutrition is key for us; 3) validation; 4) approval of goals and indicators to include civil society and business; 5) socialization. We have specific national council for urban and rural development with all actors of society (more than 18 representatives of civil society). Two years ago they had a simpler list of goals made into the national plan. It has not been easy. Hard to have dialogue and gain trust with all the actors. We agreed that we have to support our government to implement the goals.

Harmonization process: 10 specific main topics to improve our development

Difficult to get all parts of our society together. He began about one year ago to see it not just the responsibility of the government. They had workshops and civil society consultations to get to VNR process. It was maybe not perfect but it hasI been helpful for us to understand the country's needs. Challenges to gather information: public sector, municipalities, MGoS, international cooperation, etc.

VNR preparation:

Gathering information

Which of the national development priorities is more relevant for you and your family - graph
237 indicators were reviewed

Progress and Challenges - can find the full VNR. This is not perfect or the end of the process.

Case study 5: Ghana

Civil society was part of the VNR committee but didn't agree with the TORs with an accompaniment to the government's report which relied mostly on administrative data. We decided to look from the perspective of citizens. We will interview - 20% must be persons with disabilities and 40% must be women. Ghana is 52% women. We worked along side of the government's process - synergy, Youth, leaving no one behind. We included all parts of the country as the north is where we are living people behind. We got those to be part of the government's process. Southern engagement focused on youth with our youth sub-platform. We were part of the government as well as a separate. **We did not take our sample from big cities but went to rural areas.**

What we found:

1. Knowledge of SDGs was among educated but not those in rural areas
2. Civil society are not collecting qualitative data to bring realities to the fore
3. National institutional arrangement was strong but districts were doing their own thing and not involving their citizens.

Recommendations to governments:

1. Support civil society to standardize our data
2. Awareness of SDGs is shared responsible
3. How do sub-national levels coordinate with national ones

Closing: Asia Development Alliance from 28 countries. We found that most of the 8 VNR reporting is the lack of disaggregated data including qualitative data that civil society is generating and need to localize the implementation of SDGs.

Reception UCLG